For the BENEFIT *of* SIX ORPHANS.

A

FUNERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF

Mr. JOHN HOW,

WHO departed this Life the 17th Day of *November*, 1767; (having buried his Wife but a Fortnight before) and hath left behind him ſix Children quite deſtitute, the eldeſt about fourteen Years old, and the youngeſt not yet four Months.

By R. ELLIOT, A.B.

JAMES i. 27.

Pure Religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the World.

SECOND EDITION.

The SERMONS are ſold (where DONATIONS alſo for the BENEFIT of theſe ORPHANS will be received) at Mr. PARKER's, No. 69, in *Fleet-ſtreet*; Mr. CLEAVER's, No. 63, in *Cornhill*; Mr. RICHARDSON's, No. 180, in the *Borough*; and at Mr. BISHOP's, Stationer, the Corner of *Newport-ſtreet*.

N. B. It is acknowledged that certain Friends, out of Reſpect to the Deceaſed, and Compaſſion to the poor Children, have freely offered to provide for two of theſe Orphans; but the other four ſtill remain unprovided for, amongſt which is the youngeſt.

BRITISH MUSEUM
NATURAL HISTORY

ROMANS vi. 23.

For the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

THE Apoſtle, in this chapter, labours to excite, encourage, and perſuade believers, to follow after holineſs in their daily walk and converſation. The arguments and motives, by which he ſeeks to engage their hearts, and urge them to the practice of good works, are; firſt, *their baptiſm into Chriſt:* whereby we are plainly and profeſſedly engaged to holineſs of heart and life; *to walk even as Chriſt himſelf walked.* Secondly, from *their union and fellowſhip with Chriſt in his death and reſurrection*, he ſhews; that they had all ſufficiency in Him, to enable them for a holy practice; to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs. Thirdly, *by obeying the goſpel*, he teſtifies, that *we are made free from ſin*, and are no longer under the law, which is the ſtrength of ſin, but are under grace; hence alſo we are encouraged to live unto God. Fourthly, he ſhews its neceſſity; for, *if we yield ourſelves to ſerve ſin, we ſhall certainly receive* (and can rationally expect nothing elſe, but) *the wages of ſin*, which are wrath and damnation; as it follows in our text, *for the wages of ſin is death*, &c. in

which words are plainly declared, theſe three general heads, or points of doctrine.

I. That death is the wages of ſin.

II. That eternal life is the gift of God; and,

III. That this ineſtimable gift is beſtowed of God, in a way of righteouſneſs, through a mediator; that is, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Theſe are the three important truths, that are evidently contained and ſet forth in the words of our text.

Firſt, then, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew that death is the wages of ſin.

Here it is ſomewhat neceſſary to obſerve, in the firſt place, *what ſin is*; and then, ſecondly, what death is; in order that we may the better underſtand how *the wages of ſin is death.*

1. What is ſin? Sin is an offence committed againſt God, by breaking his juſt and holy law; for *ſin is the tranſgreſſion of the law.* When any one voluntarily neglects to do, or goes beyond, the commandment of the Lord; *when he adds unto it, or diminiſhes from it, then he ſinneth*; for *all unrighteouſneſs is ſin*[a]. And, that all men have thus ſinned is manifeſt; for it is written, "*There is none righteous, no,* "*not one*; there is none that underſtandeth, "there is none that ſeeketh after God, *they* "*are all gone out of the way*, they are together "become unprofitable; there is none that doeth "good

[a] 1 John v. 17.

"good, no, not one." Hence, he concludes, that *all have ſinned*, and *are come ſhort of the glory of God* [b]. That this is a juſt and true deſcription of the guilty and miſerable ſtate of man by nature, will, I hope, not be queſtioned by any one among you; for, if we admit the ſcripture to be of divine original, wherein are contained the true ſayings and teſtimony of God; the certainty and truth of this doctrine cannot, I think, be doubted of or diſputed by any one: ſeeing it is therein ſo particularly and fully ſet forth and teſtified. Hence we may learn, what the nature of ſin is in general; but no words can ſufficiently expreſs its exceeding ſinfulneſs and malignity: againſt God, it is the moſt daring inſolence, enmity, and open rebellion; towards men, it is the moſt cruel murderer and deſtroyer, both of body and ſoul. The meritorious procuring cauſe of death then is ſin, and only ſin: the holy law and juſtice of God is not the proper cauſe of death; the law only requires, that ſin ſhould receive its juſt reward, and that the ſinner ſhould be puniſhed according to his deſert. But I proceed, ſecondly, to enquire what death is.

Death is not *annihilation*, or an extinction of being: the death of a rational creature doth not deſtroy his being, or put an end to his exiſtence; but death is an *exiſting miſerably*: an accurſed, painful, contemptible, miſerable condition of being, that is death; and of this, with reſpect to fallen men, there are three degrees: the firſt, is an imperfect ſeparation, both of

[b] Rom. iii. 23.

of ſoul and body, from the favour, preſence, and enjoyment of God in this world: this is the beginning of death; it is the firſt degree of it; nor is any man exempt from it, that naturally deſcends from the loins of the firſt Adam: for both ſin and death entered into the world, by the diſobedience of the firſt man, our common father and *covenant head*; who, by breaking the law of God, brought down the curſe of the law upon himſelf, and likewiſe entailed the ſame upon all his poſterity; as it is written, "*By one man ſin entered into* "*the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death hath* "*paſſed upon all men, in whom all have ſinned*[c];" therefore Adam, and all his natural offſpring, became guilty, and worthy of death, in the ſight of God, whoſe judgment is juſt. This, then, is the true cauſe and reaſon, why we are born and come into this world in a miſerable condition. The ſinful principles and ſeeds of death are manifeſtly found in all men by nature, *nor can any man keep alive his own ſoul*, that he ſhould not ſee death: natural men are therefore called dead men; becauſe, both with reſpect to body and ſoul, they are in a dying condition, and worthy of death: hence, he ſaith, *let the dead bury their dead*; and *ſhe which liveth in pleaſure, is dead whilſt ſhe liveth*, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: and again, *thou haſt a name, that thou liveſt, and art dead.* Now, it is no particular offence, or perſonal tranſgreſſion of ours, committed by us in a *præ-exiſtent ſtate*, that is the cauſe of our being born into this

[c] Rom. v. 12.

this world in a dying condition, but the perſonal diſobedience of the firſt Adam; *for, by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation*; neither is any thing the cauſe of our being naturally ſubject to death, but ſin; namely, the ſin of Adam, which is imputed to us: for there is nothing elſe mentioned, in all the word of God, neither can it poſſibly be conceived, that any thing elſe ſhould be the cauſe of puniſhment in a rational creature, but ſin, which is the tranſgreſſion of God's law: as long then, as any man or woman abide and continue in their natural ſtate, ſo long they continue under ſin, and are under the curſe; juſtly expoſed unto, and deſerving of, eternal death, as will hereafter more fully appear; nor can any one be delivered from it, that doth not heartily repent and obey the goſpel.

When the body is actually brought under the power of death, and the immortal ſpirit ſeparated from it; this is a ſecond and farther degree of death. In this ſtate, the body remains utterly inſenſible, incapable of action, or the enjoyment of any animal good: but where is the ſoul? I ſpeak of ſuch as die in their ſins: *Where is the immortal ſoul?* The ſoul is gone into an inviſible world. Who knows where? None of the inhabitants of this lower world would have known what is become of the departed ſoul, had not God, in his word, informed us; and there he tells us, that the ſpirits of the diſobedient are *in priſon*[d], where the ſoul feels and knows its ſin and miſery, and the wrath of God,

[d] 1 Pet. iii. 19, Jude 7.

God, in ſuch a degree, as, whilſt in the body, it never knew or felt. In this condition, the ſoul remains, deſpairing and hopeleſs, to whom repentance and remiſſion of ſins, in the name of Chriſt, is no more preached for ever: but, on the contrary, a *fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation* is perpetually preſent with him. In this ſtate, the guilty ſoul begins to experience the words of the apoſtle; *ſin, when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* The body, its earthly dwelling and companion, is now no more capable of ſoothing and deceiving it, by the means of worldly purſuits and enjoyments, as it once did; but, its eyes being now opened in torments, it knows and feels, and is forced to believe God's word, and that his threatnings are both true and juſt. This is the ſecond degree of death, and this ſhall continue until the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall come in the clouds of heaven, *in flaming fire with his mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that know not God,* and *that obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt* [c]. Then comes the third, and laſt degree of death, which is the full meaſure of it, and is properly ſo termed. All that I have mentioned before does not come up to the full meaning of death, when applied to a rational ſoul, that hath ſinned againſt God; for while it was in the body, it was not puniſhed according to its deſerts, but was in a ſtate of probation; there were then propoſals and tenders of mercy; he had then calls to repentance; a way of pardon and ſalvation was ſet

[c] 2 Theſſ. i. 7, 8.

ſet before him; but the obſtinate and deceived ſinner would hearken to none of theſe things: therefore God cuts him off in his ſins. The ſoul, indeed, in a ſeparate ſtate, under wrath, knows and feels, in a great meaſure, its ſin miſery; but it knows not all: for the body has no part in it, no feeling, no participation with the ſoul in that matter. But the body had a part in ſinning, and was concerned and engaged in it: therefore when the body is raiſed, and united to its proper ſpirit, then is the time when death will be inflicted, and executed upon the whole man that ſinned, according to its proper deſert.

The deſtruction of ſoul and body together in the world to come, is diſtinguiſhed from the natural death of the body in this world, and ſtiled the *ſecond death*, becauſe it is the final execution of the wrath of God upon the impenitent and unbelieving: our Lord therefore calls it death by way of eminence, not reckoning the diſſolution of the body to be properly death. *If a man*, ſaith he, *keep my ſaying, he ſhall never ſee death*; and again, *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me ſhall never die.* The miſerable decay and deſtruction of the body is but a faint ſhadow of it: but who are they which ſhall partake of the ſecond death? God hath told us in his word. Out of many places I will only mention one; in the 21ſt of the *Revelations*, where it is thus written: *The*

fearful, (that is thoſe, who, for fear of perſecution, or of loſing worldly advantage or pleaſure, ſhall be aſhamed to own Chriſt in word and deed) *and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and all liars, ſhall have their portion in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone:* which is the *ſecond death.* The ſecond death is often mentioned in that book; wherein it is declared, and determined, to be that fearful ſtate, and condition of exiſting miſerably, in a lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, and that for ever and ever. But bleſſed be God, there are ſome, and not a few, on whom the ſecond death ſhall have no power; and who are they? They that are holy and righteous; not ſo by nature, but made ſo by juſtifying and renewing grace, through faith in our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt.* Theſe are bleſſed of God: they ſhall have a part in the firſt reſurrection, and are prieſts of God and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him in glory.

Thus have I briefly endeavoured to ſhew you what is meant by *death* in our text; and it is plain, that this is the proper meaning of it in this place, both from its oppoſition to eternal life, and from the ſcope of the whole paſſage. The Apoſtle is not treating here of the death of the body in this world; for that is common both to ſaints and ſinners: but he ſpeaks of the death of the ſinner, both ſoul and body together, in the world to come; of which

which our Lord ſpeaks, where he ſaith, *Fear God, who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell*; that is the death which St. *Paul* is here ſpeaking of. But how doth it appear that eternal death is the wages of ſin? I think it, in ſome meaſure, already appears from what hath been ſaid above of the exceeding ſinfulneſs of ſin.

But 3dly, we will endeavour a little to illuſtrate this point. The Apoſtle calls it *wages*. The word ſignifies the Roman *ſtipend*, or that proviſion or pay which the Romans gave to their ſoldiers, as a reward for their ſervice: For *Luke* chapter iii. tells us, when the ſoldiers came to *John*, and aſked him, "What ſhall we do?" he ſaid unto them, "Be content with "your *wages*." St. *Paul* alſo uſes the ſame word in the 1ſt of *Cor.* ix. "Who goeth a "warfare at his own *charges*, (or expences?) Now, in Scripture, every ſinner is ſaid to war: he is a fighter. But in whoſe ſervice? In the ſervice of ſin and the devil: he is fighting againſt God. *Sinners war after the fleſh*; and he that *warreth* after the fleſh, is one that *walks* after the fleſh; or as the Apoſtle elſewhere expreſſes it, *he ſoweth unto the fleſh*. And what ſhall ſuch a one reap? Why he cannot rationally expect to reap any other than according to the nature of the ſeed which is ſown by him. It muſt certainly produce a crop in kind; and therefore he that engages in the ſervice of ſin, cannot poſſibly expect any wages but what is the

reward of ſin; becauſe ſin is his proper lord and maſter, whom he freely ſerves, as the Apoſtle argues in this chapter. Yet ſome may ſay, Is *eternal death* the juſt and adequate reward or wages of ſin? Is not ſin an action that is finite, tranſient, and of ſhort duration? and is not eternal death a puniſhment of infinite duration? and therefore what proportion can there be between the work and the wages? Sin being acted and paſt in a very ſhort time, and its puniſhment perpetuated through a long eternity?

My brethren, the word of God plainly determines this matter: ſin is not what man conceives it to be; that is a bare *finite evil*; becauſe it is a *tranſient act*, and finiſhed in time. For it is ſuch an evil, that none but an infinite God can ſave and deliver from. Men, therefore, miſtake the matter: God never ſays in his word, It is ſuch a finite evil, that it does not deſerve infinite puniſhment; but on the contrary, he has declared that it does deſerve everlaſting puniſhment, and it ſhall certainly have its juſt reward; for there is no unrighteouſneſs with God. Does not juſtice cry as loud for the condemnation and blood of the murderer, as it does for the free diſcharge and juſtification of the innocent? Would it not be equally as unjuſt to acquit the guilty, as to condemn the righteous? But God cannot do either; and therefore ſo ſure as man is found in the judgment-day with ſin chargeable upon him, and cleaving to him, ſo ſure

will he receive the uttermoſt deſert of it, becauſe God is juſt. — But it may be made more fully to appear from hence,

1. Becauſe the object againſt whom ſin is committed is an infinite object: it is the majeſty of God: and is it not reaſonable; nay, is it not common among men, to eſtimate the evil of an action, by the greatneſs and majeſty of the perſon againſt whom that evil is committed? And therefore *ſin* being committed againſt an *infinite God*, who is infinitely good, it may well be accounted an *infinite evil*. The apoſtle concludes ſin to be exceeding ſinful; that is, unſpeakably, infinitely ſo, becauſe it *worketh death*, in the ſoul, *by that which is good*. Men little think, as we ſaid before, what ſin is: ſin, indeed, is not a creature; yet the ſcripture often conſiders it perſonally, becauſe it makes the moſt excellent creatures, who are the ſubjects of ſin, tormentors and deſtroyers of one another; yea, blaſphemers and haters of the ever bleſſed God. *Sin* ſeeks to thruſt itſelf into the very heavens. It would exalt itſelf above the ſtars. Sin, if poſſible, would ſeat itſelf in the very throne of God himſelf; and exalt the apoſtate creature above the glorious Creator: and nothing leſs, nothing ſhort of this, does ſin aim at, and the ſinner attempt to do. This is the language of ſinners; they ſay unto God, "depart from "us; we deſire not the knowledge of thy "ways: what is the Almighty that we ſhould "ſerve him; or what profit ſhall we have if "we pray to him?" And again, "Cauſe the

"holy

" holy one of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us." Yea, the man of ſin oppoſeth and exalteth himſelf above all that is called God, or worſhipped; ſo that he, as God, ſitteth in the temple of God, ſhewing himſelf that he is God: Thus he denieth the God that is above. And what think you do ſuch ſinners deſerve? God knows what they deſerve; and he has already told us in his word: but unbelieving, wicked, rebellious man, will not believe God's teſtimony.

2. Sin appears to be an infinite evil, and therefore to deſerve an infinite puniſhment, from the ſubject of ſin which is deſtroyed by it. Now the ſubject (of whom we ſpeak) is man, the creature of God, which he created for himſelf, and made to live eternally: and eſpecially his immortal part, the rational ſoul. But ſin hath taken ſuch poſſeſſion both of the body and ſoul of man, that it can never be eradicated, nor be ſeparated from him, but by a new creation of Almighty power. It is eaſier for the crimſon and the ſcarlet to be ſeparated from the wool, than it is for ſin to be ſeparated from the mind and heart of man. Sin co-exiſts with its ſubject, when it once has taken hold of it: and all the created powers of heaven and earth cannot deliver the ſoul from it. Sinners, becauſe they will not know God, nor believe his word, but love darkneſs rather than light, may, for a time, make light of ſin, and ſhut their eyes, and ſport themſelves with their own deceivings, being led by the devil,

devil, the world, and their own luſts: but when the firſt death comes, then their eyes will be open to ſee their madneſs and folly: and then will they know, that the ſecond death in endleſs miſery is but the juſt reward of ſin. But I pray God that you which hear me may rightly conſider your ways, and be turned to the Lord; ſo will you eſcape eternal death, and iniquity ſhall not be your ruin. Hence you may ſee what evil ſin hath done: it hath deſtroyed God's creature man: deſtroyed his image: and inſtead of the image of God, once exiſting and formed in him; ſin, having utterly defaced and deſtroyed it, hath pourtrayed there and engraven the image of the devil. Sin is engraven on the heart of man as *with a pen of iron, and the point of a diamond:* and with great confidence I dare appeal to all you that fear God, that you never could have changed your own hearts, nor have renewed yourſelves in the ſpirit of your minds: if God had not done it for you, it would have remained undone for ever.

3. Sin appears to be an infinite evil, and worthy of an infinite puniſhment, from the deſires, diſpoſitions, and endeavours of the ſinner. Fallen man would ſin eternally if he could: his deſire is towards it: he would never ceaſe from ſin, nor wiſh to be ſaved from it: was man permitted to live for ever on the earth, and left to his own choice, he would chuſe to ſin for ever.

There is no need of trying man through infinite

infinite ages, to know whether he would do ſo, or not. It is ſufficiently manifeſt: for we ſee that man being left to his own will, he hardens his heart in ſin, and grows more and more wicked daily. See the adulterer, the profane ſwearer, the drunkard, and the covetous: doth the *forbearance, long-ſuffering, and goodneſs of God*, withdraw man from his purpoſe of ſinning, and effectually lead him unto repentance? Doth he *ceaſe to do evil, and learn to do good*; becauſe he is warned every hour, and tried for many years, day by day continually? As men advance in years, do they decreaſe in wickedneſs? Certainly not. As long as there is any oil remaining in the lamp of corrupt nature, ſo long its deſires are inſatiable, and the ſinner is thereby urged to fulfil the luſts thereof: Sin is never ſatisfied, nor the ſinner with yielding obedience to it: the longer any one obeys ſin, the more he delights, and is hardened in ſin; which, in many inſtances, is notorious: in whom alſo the ſcripture is fulfilled which ſaith, "Let favour be ſhewed to "the wicked, yet will he not learn righteouſ-"neſs: in the land of uprightneſs will he "deal unjuſtly, and will not behold the ma-"jeſty of the Lord[f]." And again; *becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil*[g]. Thus the ſinner, if he poſſibly could, would ſin eternally; and therefore he deſerves eternal puniſhment.

4. This is further manifeſt from the *price of*

[f] Iſa. xxvi. 10. [g] Eccl. viii. 11.

of a ſinner's redemption, even the blood of Chriſt; which, as the ſcripture alſo ſpeaks, is the *blood of God*; that is, of God incarnate: as then divine juſtice requires infinite ſatisfaction for ſin, and a price of infinite value hath been actually paid for the redemption of ſinners, it may be certainly concluded, that ſin is an infinite evil. And that, which will exceedingly enhance the guilt, and increaſe the damnation of periſhing ſinners under the goſpel, is; that mercy, forgiveneſs of ſins, and ſalvation is therein revealed, and preached unto them; and is alſo promiſed, and actually given, to all that believe on the name of the only begotten Son of God; but many make light of it, they will not come to Chriſt, that they might have life: wherefore he ſaith, he that believeth not the Son, ſhall not ſee life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. The ſinner then, dying in his ſins, deſerves to be puniſhed with eternal death, as much as the hireling deſerves his wages, when he hath finiſhed his work, or, as the thief and the murderer deſerve to be condemned to death and executed.

The laſt thing that I ſhall mention (which is the ground of all that I have ſaid) in confirmation of this awful truth, is, that God hath declared it in his word, over and over again. Let men cavil, wreſt, and torture the words of ſcripture ever ſo much; it is written, as with a ſun-beam, in the ſacred volume, that God will puniſh impenitent ſinners eternally; and, I think I may ſafely affirm, that there is

no man, who doth not reject divine revelation, and wilfully ſhut his eyes againſt the light of ſcripture and conſcience, but thinks, or, at leaſt, is afraid that he ſhall find it ſo, if he repents not. What does God ſay in his word concerning this matter? we are expreſly told, that the King will ſay to them on his left hand, "*Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting* "*fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*" and again, of the ſame perſons, he ſays; "*Theſe* "ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment." This is the ſentence and judgment of God; *and ſhall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* The ſcripture is abundantly plain and full to this point; yet men, by corrupt reaſoning, will ſo ſtrain and torture the ſcripture, as to make it *ſeem* to ſpeak quite otherwiſe: as if the words *for ever* and *eternity*, when applied to the torments of the damned, were to be underſtood only in a limited and reſtrained ſenſe, becauſe they are ſometimes found with that limitation, when applied to the Jewiſh ſtate, &c. and to the end of the world. But, I have noticed it again and again, that the very ſame words in the *original*, which are uſed to expreſs the eternity of the ever-bleſſed God, and the endleſs felicity of his choſen, are alſo very frequently uſed to denote and expreſs the eternity of the puniſhment of the wicked, in the world to come *. Theſe objections, therefore, are nothing but the cavillings and falſe reaſonings of wicked men; but ſuch is the folly and wickedneſs of the

* See a few inſtances of this kind, in Matt. xxv. 46. 2 Theſſ. i. 9. Rev. iv. 9. & xix. 3.

the heart of man, that he is fond of making lies his refuge; he will readily catch at any imaginary vain hope, if he can but thereby perſuade himſelf, he may at laſt be ſaved; or, at leaſt, that he ſhall not be puniſhed eternally: the thought is ſo awfully terrible, who, ſay they, can bear it? Will a God of infinite mercy (but he is alſo a God of infinite juſtice) puniſh his creatures eternally? Thus they make themſelves judges in their own cauſe, and, to juſtify themſelves, would ſet aſide the divine word, and condemn him that is moſt juſt. They will not part from their ſins, and turn to God; and yet, after all, they would not receive the wages of ſin: but one or the other you muſt do. Let not ſin, therefore, let not the world, nor Satan deceive you, for except you heartily repent, and turn to God, and believe on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and depart from iniquity, you cannot be ſaved; but will certainly have your portion in everlaſting burnings, which is the ſecond death; *for the wages of ſin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life:* which leads me, ſecondly, to ſhew how eternal life is the gift of God.

From what hath been ſaid above, it is plain, that it cannot be merited by us; for, if all men are ſinners, and all men becauſe of ſin deſerve eternal death, it is impoſſible that they can do any thing, thereby to merit eternal glory. Can any of you conceive, how eternal life ſhould be the reward of man's righteouſneſs? Such an expreſſion is no where warranted in ſcripture,

nor is any ſuch doctrine taught in God's word. Had man indeed never ſinned, the caſe would have been otherwiſe, but man hath ſinned, and is fallen under the curſe of God's juſt law. Although eternal death be the reward due to man's ſin, yet eternal life is not a reward due to man's righteouſneſs; for the apoſtle teſtifies it is the gift of God. Man may ſin againſt God, and deſerve wrath and puniſhment; but, in a way of righteouſneſs, he can advance nothing that is meritorious, becauſe, in doing good, he receives both will and power from God; but he did not receive ſin from God, for ſin is of the Devil. That it may, therefore, better appear what eternal life is, and how it is the gift of God, I will give you a ſhort deſcription of it, from the word of truth. It here ſtands oppoſed to eternal death: now, as death ſignifies a contemptible, miſerable, and accurſed condition of being; *life*, on the contrary, imports a manner and condition of being, that is moſt honourable, bleſſed, and glorious; into which bleſſed ſtate, every one of God's children enter whilſt in this world, for they believe on the Son of God, and "*he that believeth on him* "*hath everlaſting life*[h]:" they know God, and Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath ſent: and the knowledge of him is life eternal. So then, by faith they are already partakers of the life, the love, the knowledge and enjoyment of God; though it is in a very imperfect manner: but when their appointed time is come to leave this world, their bodies are laid to ſleep in their

[h] John iii. 36.

their graves, there to reſt till the reſurrection, and their departed ſouls enter into paradiſe; their ſouls are not in priſon with the ſouls of unbelievers; and therefore in that ſenſe, they do not all go to one place; but heaven is open to receive the ſouls of the righteous, and they are numbered with the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. In this ſeparate ſtate of bleſſedneſs, they know and enjoy the love of God to them in Jeſus Chriſt, as they never did or could before; now they both hear, and ſee, and poſſeſs in a more glorious manner, what before they ſaw, only by faith, afar off; and what, in hope, they were daily looking for. But, with reſpect to their bodies, theſe are left behind them, and by that means they leave all ſin behind them too, with all pain, and likewiſe all infirmity: neither can their happy ſouls be any more aſſaulted, buffetted, or afflicted, by wicked ſpirits, or wicked men; and, as to their bodies, they feel and fear nothing, but reſt in hope; and they know aſſuredly that Jeſus will raiſe them up at the laſt day. And what then? Why then, he will make their bodies ſpiritual, immortal, incorruptible, and glorious, like unto the glorious body of Chriſt; and, in that body ſhall the ſouls of believers reſt, and dwell, and reign with God, and with Chriſt, throughout eternity: but not ſo the bodies of the ungodly, they indeed ſhall be raiſed, but not in glory. Now the happineſs and bleſſedneſs of this eternal life, here ſpoken of in the text, and declared to be the gift of God, is, in ſcripture, briefly

briefly mentioned, and deſcribed in a very ſweet manner; the happy and holy poſſeſſors of it are ſaid to *ſee God* face to face: they live in the preſence and *fruition of God*; they are ſaid to be freed for ever from all foes, and from all evils, and to have all enemies under their feet; they are entered into the holy Jeruſalem (all whoſe inhabitants are righteous) where ſhall be "*no more death, nor ſorrow, "nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more "pain*;" the ſun of perſecution, and the heat, the leaſt degree thereof, ſhall no more light upon them; neither ſhall they hunger any more, nor thirſt any more: but, on the contrary, "*God, who ſitteth upon the throne, ſhall "dwell among them, and the Lamb that is in "the midſt of the throne ſhall feed them, and "lead them unto living fountains of waters, and "God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes*:" thus will he be to them a father, and they ſhall be to him for ſons and daughters; a crown of glory, and of righteouſneſs alſo, will he give to every one of them, and they ſhall reign for ever and ever.

This is a brief account of the bleſſed condition of that life, which is here called eternal life; and this, ſaith the apoſtle, is the gift of God: which alſo is abundantly manifeſt, both from ſcripture and experience: for, whatſoever is the righteous procuring cauſe thereof, whatſoever grace leads unto it, fits us for it, and finally puts us into the full poſſeſſion of it; all, and every part thereof, is the gift of God.

1. Doth *righteouſneſs* juſtify the ſinner in the ſight of God, by delivering him from death, and giving him a title to life everlaſting? Behold it is not man's righteouſneſs, but God's: it is of God's providing and his gift, though ſinners, by faith, are covered with it, and juſtified by it; therefore it is called the righteouſneſs of God, who imputes, and gives it, as he hath promiſed, unto all them that believe: that righteouſneſs, therefore, whereby we are juſtified before God, is not of ourſelves, but of God, and is his gift unto us. *Bleſſed is the man to whom God imputeth it:* for his righteouſneſs and ſalvation always go together [i].

2. Is it neceſſary that a man ſhould *repent* in order to his being ſaved? (for it is written, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.) This alſo is the gift of God [k], and he hath intruſted Chriſt the Lord with it; *for him hath God exalted, to give repentance* unto Iſrael, and remiſſion of ſins; therefore repentance muſt be preached in his name.

3. Is *faith in Chriſt* neceſſary to the ſinner's eternal ſalvation? This likewiſe is the gift of God; for it is written, to you it is given on the behalf of Chriſt to believe on his name [l]: and again, faith is not of ourſelves, *it is the gift of God.*

4. Is it by the *Holy Spirit*, that we are made partakers of this grace, and *ſanctified*, and made meet for heaven? HE, alſo, is the gift of God, as it is written, *I will pour water upon him that is thirſty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will*

[i] Iſa. lxii. 1. Rom. i 16, 17, & iv, 6. [k] Acts xi. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. [l] Philip. i. 29. Eph. ii. 8.

will pour my ſpirit upon thy ſeed: which God, according to his promiſe, *hath given to them that obey him*[m].

Laſtly, Is *Chriſt* the mediator between God and man? Is *he* the only Saviour of loſt ſinners, *in whom it pleaſed the Father all fullneſs ſhould dwell?* Behold, Chriſt himſelf is the gift of God! *For God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth on him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life*[n].

Thus it plainly appears, that eternal life is the gift of God; for all our right unto it, and meetneſs for it, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs, is not of ourſelves, but of God: the grace whereby we turn to God, ſuch as *repentance*; the grace, whereby we actually receive, and are intereſted in Chriſt, which is *faith*; are both promiſed of God to his people, and freely beſtowed on them by Jeſus Chriſt; whom, in conſideration of his obedience unto death, even the death of the croſs, *God hath highly exalted, and given him a name, which is above every name*, even the name of JESUS! that is, *a Saviour*: through whom, as by a way caſt up and prepared of God, ſinners come unto the Father with acceptance; being reconciled unto God by the blood of Chriſt. Therefore,

Thirdly; Eternal life is the gift of God in a way of righteouſneſs, by a mediator, that is, as our text ſpeaks, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. As all things were created at firſt by Jeſus Chriſt, and nothing was made without him; ſo likewiſe, in the new creation; in the redemption

[m] Acts v. 22. [n] John iii. 16.

redemption, juſtification, ſanctification, and complete ſalvation of fallen man, nothing is promiſed or given to man, or wrought in him, but in and by the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. Therefore when ſinners are firſt called by grace out of darkneſs into God's marvellous light, they are called into the fellowſhip of his ſon *Jeſus Chriſt*; who of God is made unto them wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption, that he might be all in all: therefore the Scripture teſtifies we cannot have true repentance but by him, whom God hath exalted to give this grace to his people: neither can we have true faith without Chriſt; for he is both the author and finiſher of our faith: in ſhort, we cannot receive nor do any good thing without him; for all fullneſs dwells in Chriſt, and he therefore ſaith, *Without me ye can do nothing*. Hence we are ſaid to be ſaved by the grace of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, of whoſe fullneſs all ſaints receive even grace for grace: for God hath given and treaſured up for us all grace in *Chriſt*. It is therefore manifeſt, that eternal life is the gift of God in a way of righteouſneſs, that he might be juſt, as well as merciful, in the pardoning and ſaving of miſerable ſinners. But it may be ſaid, to whom is this ineſtimable gift promiſed? and on whom is it actually beſtowed? To ſuch ſinners of mankind that return to God, by our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, and receive him for their righteouſneſs and hope of eternal ſalvation. Thoſe then that embrace *Chriſt*, by

a living faith, receiving him for their righteouſneſs and ſtrength; are partakers of the promiſe of eternal life in *Chriſt Jeſus*, and ſhall certainly be ſaved with an everlaſting ſalvation: for the blood of *Chriſt* cleanſeth them from all ſin, and the holy ſpirit ſanctifieth their ſouls by the faith of *Chriſt*: and that ſame ſpirit, which raiſed *Chriſt* from the dead, ſhall alſo raiſe the bodies of every one of his members at the laſt day, and make them glorious in ſoul and body both for ever more. Hence the Chriſtian is taught to uſe this triumphant language; ſaying, *O! death, where is thy ſting? O grave! where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law: But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

Laſtly, I ſhall draw two or three inferences, and then conclude with a few remarks ſuited to the preſent occaſion.

And, 1. We may juſtly infer from what hath been ſaid, that ſin is a greater evil than mankind commonly believe or imagine: it is the greateſt of all evils. God, who knows the uttermoſt evil, or deſert of ſin, hath told us in his word, and teſtified, that it juſtly merits eternal death; and that in righteouſneſs he will puniſh ſin, and ſinners eternally, except they repent. If then thou would ſee ſin, as ſin, look into the word of God, and there thou wilt find how it worketh death in the conſcience, by that which is good; and from thence it appears to be exceeding ſinful: moreover it

hath

hath taught creatures once holy and happy, to rebel and exalt themſelves againſt the Moſt High, their Creator, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever more, amen. Angels were thruſt out of Heaven, and caſt down to Hell; and men alſo are ſhut out of Heaven, and condemned to have their portion with devils, in the lake that burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death, becauſe of ſin: but above all its infinite evil appears, in that *God was manifeſted in fleſh to deſtroy it*; and nothing but the ſufferings and accurſed death of a perſon of *infinite dignity*, even of *Jeſus Chriſt*, the ſon of God, could deſtroy ſin, and ſave the ſinner.

2. It is a vain thing for any one to expect deliverance from eternal death, the fruit and wages of ſin; without being firſt delivered from ſin, the cauſe of death: for until the cauſe be removed, the effect cannot ceaſe. If then we would eſcape the wrath to come, we muſt firſt be freed from ſin. The ſting of death is ſin even in this world, and after death comes the judgment: therefore ſeek diligently to be juſtified from the guilt, and ſaved from the power of ſin: for as long as ſin remains unpardoned, aud unſubdued, we cannot but be ſubject to the fearful curſe due unto it.

3. Is eternal life the gift of God? then look and expect to be ſaved by grace, not by works; uſe, indeed, and that diligently, all means, ordinances, and duties, which are commanded thee in the holy ſcripture; yet ſeek not to be

ſaved, either for them, or by them; but look for eternal life, only through the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord: for it is written, *God hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpoſe and grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the world began*[o]; and again, *not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which he ſhed on us abundantly through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*[p]. Is Chriſt then the only way to God for loſt mankind? Is he the only Saviour of ſinners, by whom they are delivered both from the guilt and power of ſin, both from the curſe of the law and the wrath to come? See then that you acknowledge and receive him as ſuch. Doſt thou want repentance, and faith, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs? Doſt thou want the Holy Spirit to quicken and ſtrengthen thee in the ways of godlineſs? to comfort and ſanctify thee according to truth? Look to Chriſt for all: Aſk of God for theſe promiſed bleſſings and benefits, only in the name of the Lord Jeſus; for him hath God the Father ſealed: But, if thou receiveſt Chriſt, thou wilt receive all things in Chriſt, with eternal glory.

But I haſten to obſerve a few things concerning our deceaſed brother. Altho' the occaſion of our preſent diſcourſe is not for the ſake of the dead, but of the living; yet I will add a few words concerning the deceaſed, and I believe

[o] 1 Tim. i. 10. [p] Tit. iii. 5, 6.

believe you generally expect it. Mr. How was perſonally known to moſt of you: in times paſt, he walked, as other Gentiles walk, in ſin and error, being, by nature, a child of wrath, even as others; but, being called by grace, he was converted from the error of his ways, and became a ſervant of righteouſneſs, having his fruit unto holineſs: and I am perſuaded, thoſe of you who knew him, both before, and ſince, his obeying the goſpel, will acknowledge, that, as in principle, ſo in practice, he was changed for the better; no more truſting in himſelf, but in the living God by Jeſus Chriſt; no more *walking after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit* [q]: and thus, as far as I have heard or known, he continued ſtedfaſt in the faith of Chriſt, and walking in the fear of God. He did not faint, nor turn aſide after the world and the fleſh, by reaſon of adverſity, croſſes, and temptations, as many do; but through grace, he perſevered in the way of truth and holineſs, even unto death. And here we may obſerve the bleſſed and powerful effects of the goſpel on the hearts and lives of ſinners: for it was not by the preaching of the law, that he was turned from the evil of his ways: it was not by hearing the doctrine of ſalvation by works, that he was delivered from ſin; but by hearing the doctrine of ſalvation by faith in Chriſt Jeſus; which faith purifieth the heart, and worketh by love; for the goſpel is the appointed inſtrument of God for the converſion

[q] Rom. viii. 1.

converſion and ſalvation of ſinners: and therefore it is called the *miniſtration of the ſpirit*, and of *righteouſneſs*, and of *life* [1]. Thus, the preaching of Chriſt, or the goſpel, is called the power, (that is, as a means or inſtrument) of God unto ſalvation, to every one that believeth: therefore it behoves you to take heed who, and what, you hear.

But to return: When it pleaſed the Lord to take away the wife of our deceaſed brother, (who died not quite three weeks before him) he patiently ſubmitted to the ſtroke, without murmuring, though he was left in needy circumſtances, with a young family of ſix children. But his chief concern and care for them, as well as for himſelf, was plainly of a ſpiritual nature: for, having ſent for a friend, at the beginning of his illneſs (after intimating a perſuaſion, that he ſhould not recover) he had only this requeſt to make; that he (his friend) would endeavour to provide godly maſters for his two ſons. Nor did he, at any time, as far as I have known, diſcover the leaſt uneaſy care about any one of his children; though he was evidently a kind and tender parent: deſire of life, or fear of death, he diſcovered not, but rather the reverſe, for he was manifeſtly built upon, and ſupported by, the rock Chriſt; for, he expreſly declared, that his only hope and dependance was on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. During his illneſs, he often gave plain intimations,

[1] 2 Cor. chap. iii.

mations, that his ſoul was ſpiritually engaged; and when one ſpake to him of God's faithful promiſes to his people, citing ſome of them; particularly, that in Iſaiah; this is to me as the waters of Noah, for, as I have ſworn, ſaith the Lord, &c. he ſaid, "That is my "foundation;" and, preſently after, added, "He hath made with me an everlaſting co-"venant."

A little before his departure (having been a long time delirious) he was thought by ſome of his friends to be ſenſible; and one preſent aſked him, if he knew them? he ſaid, "Yes." If he could ſpeak to them? he ſaid, "No." He was then aſked, if he was *ſatisfied* and *comfortable* in his ſoul? and he anſwered, "Yes:" and, having ſaid this, he ſoon after fell aſleep; leaving behind him, ſix deſtitute orphans, for whoſe ſake this ſermon is now preached.

They are left, indeed, without any worldly ſubſtance to ſubſiſt on, (Mr. How's temporal effects being reckoned only ſufficient to pay his juſt debts) nor do I know of any near relation, that is capable of providing for any one of them: there are, I acknowledge, two friends, that have promiſed to take care of two of them; but ſtill there are four left wholly unprovided for, having nothing but what is freely given, or collected among Chriſtian friends, for their ſupport; and the youngeſt of them is not yet four months old.

old. Now, what I have to ſay to you, on the behalf of theſe children, is but ſhort; neither do I think it needful to ſay much, in order to excite you to a free and liberal contribution, on ſuch an occaſion as this.

Firſt, then, conſider, that by miniſtring to their wants, you may, through the mercy of God, be the happy means and inſtruments of preſerving them from ruin, both in ſoul and body; whereby theſe poor children may be kept out of the hands of wicked, mercenary, and cruel perſons; who, becauſe they are orphans, would avail themſelves of their friendleſs condition, and ſerve themſelves of them. If your own children were left thus deſtitute and friendleſs, (which may be the caſe with ſome of you) how would you wiſh they ſhould be dealt with? In the ſame manner, deal you with theſe; by miniſtring to their wants, according to your ability: It may be the Lord will take notice of it, and graciouſly accept your offering; for, *he that watereth, ſhall be watered himſelf*: not that you are to be ſaved for this, or for any other of your works; neither are you to look for a reward from God, in a way of debt: but, is it not a deſirable thing, and moſt honourable, to be uſed as an inſtrument, and, as it were, *God's almoner*, in conveying relief and temporal bleſſings to his needy children? Beſides, *what haſt thou, which thou haſt not received?* and who, but God,

God, hath made thee to differ from the poor and afflicted? Therefore, be not cruelly covetous, but merciful and liberal: *be not high-minded, but fear.* It is here confeſſed, that, after you have done all that is commanded you, ye are but unprofitable ſervants: but, do not therefore ſay, I will do nothing: remember God ſaith it is thy duty, and he hath commanded it; and wilt thou not do what God has commanded, unleſs thou canſt make a gain of it, in a legal and ſelf-righteous way?

2. We may obſerve, that none are more commended to us, in the word of God, as proper objects of charity, than theſe before us. God himſelf is a *Father of the fatherleſs*: by miniſtring, therefore, to the relief of theſe orphans, you will be imitators of God, which is one part of the character of his children; for *pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourſelves unſpotted from the world.* Are you poor, and not able to give much? Do not, therefore, loſe thy privilege: let not the preſent opportunity of doing good paſs from thee: God requires a gift, only according to thy ability; for, *if there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not*[s]. The Lord doth not eſtimate a man's charity by what he gives, but by the ability of the giver: on this account, ſome of the poor exceed even the rich in acts

[s] 2 Cor. viii. 12.

of charity: the poor widow caſt in but one farthing, yet, being all ſhe had, her name is mentioned with honour, (whilſt thoſe of the rich, though they gave much, are buried in ſilence) and will be as long as the world endures. It behoves the rich, then, if in this reſpect, they would be honoured of God, (for he ſaith, honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance; and, *them that honour me, I will honour*) to give both freely and largely, according to their worldly ſubſtance or eſtate.

Laſtly, therefore, *to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed*[t]; provided that they are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done; that is from love to God, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Let your good works then be free, and let them be full: always remembering, that as your perſon, ſo your work is accepted of God, only in a way of grace, through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſuffered for us, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to god; *for the wages of ſin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* To whom be glory and dominion for ever, Amen.

[t] Heb. xiii. 16.

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